

Results of Focus Group Discussions (Think-Ins) Spring Semester 2015-Fall Semester 2015

Results of Focus Group Discussions (Think-Ins) between Faculty, Chairs, SLO Coordinators, Deans and the Campus Outcomes Coordinator. "Think Ins" open to the campus community were held in the Spring, 2015 and more directed "Think Ins" were held with Academic Schools and Student Services in the Fall Semester, 2015. The list of participants is below followed by the questions posed, and the responses. Highlighted responses were the most common responses to a given question.

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Jeffery Austin	Craig Jeffrey	Lisa Shapiro
Jeff Barry	Maria Jose Zeledon	Leslie Shimazaki
Danene Brown	Ken Kuniyuki	Steven Siegel
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John Crocitti	Andy MacNeill	Leslie Styles
Donna Duchow	Larry Maxey	George Svoboda
Christy DuPraw	Dina Miyoshi	Paul Sykes
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Rob Fender	Karen Owen	Kim Tran
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Margaret Fickess	Svenna Pedersen	Tracey Walker
Peggy Fischer	Tracy Penrod	Dwayne Wesley
Lou Ann Gibson	Kim Perigo	Stephanie Williams
Mike Goldstein	Thalia Prum	George Ye
John Gregg	Mariette Rattner	Katie Zolezz

Why do you assess SLO's in your classroom?

- **Compliance**
- **Tangible Data of evidenced outcomes.**
- **Linking the subject being taught to the life outcomes/life skills, not just the objectives of the course. Making sure students are getting knowledge of real world.**
- Continuous evaluation of your process as instructor.
- To inform curriculum changes.
- Making sure that what we say/think we are doing is actually what we are doing.
- Help students see the value of their education.
- Students deserve to know the expectations for a course/program/degree.
- We are creating intellect, not just passing along information.
- To find out whether students are getting the learning or knowledge you think that they should be.
- Improving teaching strategies, working together, sharing strategies.
- Teaching students to act in a way that society would accept their behavior.
- That is how you get to be a better teacher, by learning what is not working. Once you lose your efficacy, you should be removed from the classroom.

- Environments have changed, the world has changed, we want our students to be successful.
- To inform curriculum changes; evaluate new courses/programs.
- Used properly, there is an incredible data.

CONCERNS/CHALLENGES:

- Making an assumption that you are not already doing this in your classroom and that therefore, you must.
- Using assessment as an accountability tool beyond the classroom.
- Standardizing
- Time commitment to do the job well.
- Difficult to internalize the process we are being asked to do.
- Students don't like to be molded in their life skills.
- Data driven data is only part of the scientific process.

WHAT TYPES OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS DO YOU USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM? DO YOU THINK OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS PROVIDE MEANINGFUL DATA? AND, DOES YOUR ASSESSMENT DATA FIT INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF TASKSTREAM?

- **Lack of appropriate scientific evaluation is available in a two year college, and we have no process for follow through. We often don't see their success until they are gone.**
- Faculty will determine the type of assessment whether it be an essay, discussion, or project.
- Surveys (pre/post and post)
- Rubrics
- Series of touchstone projects in the classroom that run the full semester and use data as real world example.
- Employment Outcomes Survey--CTE specific, random sample for a sequence of courses. Provides regional feedback.
- A portfolio of student work that shows progress over time.
- A question off of an exam that speaks to the outcome being assessed.
- An exam or test.
- What ultimately matters happens between an instructor and a student--how do you document?
- Student expectations? How do we find out what students want out of the class?
- Faculty who are professionals in their fields--the way we teach, what we teach--providing direct industry feedback.

CONCERNS/CHALLENGES

- **What defines success?**
- How do you capture Outcomes data (ILO) for the student who isn't really pursuing a degree, but may be doing job training or learning advancement?
- Needs to be more subjective.
- Difficult to capture all students getting information from different instructors.
- Feels like we are being forced to standardize.

HOW DO YOU DISCOVER NEW LEARNING PROCESSES IN YOUR DISCIPLINE? HOW DO YOU DISCOVER NEW METHODS TO TEACH? DO YOU USE YOUR SLO ASSESSMENT DATA TO IMPROVE YOUR TEACHING? IF SO, HOW?

- Learn from the classroom

- Self assessment surveys
- Collaborative processes with peers
- Taking classes
- Observing others in practice
- Conferences
- Professional organizations
- Peer evaluation
- Self evaluation
- Departmental discussions/meetings
- Readings (newsletters, articles, etc.)
- One on one within the department
- Internet research
- SLO data drives procedural change
- SLO data drives curriculum change
- SLO data may find a common curriculum issue across sections of a course, but not so much with one instructor's process--we do that naturally.

CHALLENGES

- No place to share teaching strategies--need spaces for faculty to gather informally within department

HOW ARE DECISIONS MADE AS TO WHERE TIME, ENERGY, AND MONEY SHOULD BE REPURPOSED WITHIN YOUR DISCIPLINE? IS SLO ASSESSMENT DATA USED FOR THIS PURPOSE?

- **Chairs and Deans make the decisions**
- **Departmental discussions**
- **Don't know.**
- **Haven't discussed SLO data in regards to resource requests.**
- Yes, along with District data.
- Use SLO data in addition to Industry research statistics for Perkins and Program Review
- Yes, to justify new supply needs for classroom

CHALLENGES

- Quantifiable data vs. anecdotal data--ability to use both in TaskStream and Program Review
- Tracking non-statistical data
- Have to look more at the weaknesses than the strengths (SLO data is most helpful in resource allocation when looking at the weaknesses in a program).

WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT CYCLE?

- **The ability for departments to share data more easily (TaskStream silos everything and limits accessibility)**
- **Better access to better reports--being able to easily see the dialogue, easily being able to see the assessment and the outcome, easily being able to pull down all the data for a course over the cycle, being able to see where you are in the multi year cycle.**

- **Long term tracking of student's success by the College.**
- **We need an out of the box way of communicating and measuring.**
- **Inherent limitation of the data environment you are forced to work in.**
- **You can't measure some learning experiences in numbers. A way to validate and record those experiences.**
- **The assessment results collection mechanism should have a more informal, less numbers driven path for programs that choose less data driven assessments.**
- **Link from Program Review to SLO data (mechanism)**
- **Place in the mechanism to record departmental conversations regarding SLO's**
- How does Student Services fit into the cycle (systemically different process)?
- Realizing that there is a point where you've assessed an SLO to death--next steps?
- In regards to SLO data, pure numbers don't mean anything.
- Would like to return to the course outcome ties to program outcome which ties to ILO which are very global.
- Stop measuring outcomes and measure student success. Define the student who is successful coming out of your classroom, and then describe why that student is successful.
- SLO assessment should not be standardized.
- Assessing how well the campus is doing with its body--students and staff? Tying outcomes to student success, equity, etc.
- Is it possible to be able to assess the rest of the ILO's without using Critical Thinking Skills --inter-related skill sets rather than everything being assessed individually.
- Stop assessing for an external audience.
- Make it simple.
- Why does everything have to have an outcome?
- Use SLO's to marry the missions of the student learning center and faculty leaning center. (Tutoring center and Faculty Learning Center)--look at Saddleback as an example.

MISCELLANEOUS, BUT IMPORTANT...

- What qualifies ACCJC to judge me in my classroom? Are they discipline experts?
- The statistics we gather in SLO assessments are useless.
- Who is going to look at this? Should this not be a document that faculty uses rather than something developed for a outside party?
- The high cost of text books--equity issue.
- Adjunct Academy--summer program, SLO's should be part of it.
- I'm assessing all the time--why does outcomes assessment have to be in a silo.
- How do we take into account the inconsistencies in our classrooms from semester to semester, year to year--based on variables we do not control?
- A large number of students who walk through my door are not college ready--it is not my job to teach them basic skills. Yet, we are discouraged from putting pre-requisites on classes. Again, how do we take into account variables we do not control.
- You pass my class, you've proven you can think critically, communicate both orally and in writing. What assessment is more proven than that?
- Because we are scientists, what's the damn question!?